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DR. C. NATHAMUNI NAIDU :—" Is it a fact that the President has given unauthorized loans to most of his relatives ? "

THE HON. DR. U. KRISHNA RAO :—" These are common allegations with regard to the working of every co-operative society in this State. This allegation has been made with regard to this particular Society also. We are investigating the matter to find out if there is any truth in it."

DR. C. NATHAMUNI NAIDU :—" How many members of this Society have become defaulters? "

THE HON. DR. U. KRISHNA RAO :—" I should like to have notice of this question."

Power laundries in the Tamil districts.

* 30 Q.—SRI M. ETHIRAJULU : Will the Hon. the Minister for Industries, Labour and Co-operation be pleased to state—

(a) how many power laundries are in the Tamil districts of the Madras State; and

(b) whether any investigation has been made in regard to the durability of the cloth washed by power laundry; and if so, with what result?

THE HON. DR. U. KRISHNA RAO :—" (a) There are ten power laundries in the Tamil districts of this State.

" (b) No investigation has so far been made on this subject."

SRI M. ETHIRAJULU :—" May I know whether the Government have received any representation from the public to the effect that the clothes washed by power laundry are damaged and, if so, what action do the Government propose to take? "

THE HON. DR. U. KRISHNA RAO :—" We have no such information."

SRI T. PURUSHOTHAM :—" Is there not a power laundry in the Madras General Hospital? I believe the washing of the clothes there is excellently done? "

THE HON. DR. U. KRISHNA RAO :—" There is one power laundry in the Madras General Hospital."

Number of palmyra trees dried up in Tiruchendur taluk.

* 31 Q.—SRI S. B. ADITYAN : Will the Hon. the Minister for Land Revenue be pleased to state—

(a) whether a large number of palmyra trees in Udangudi and Sattankulam firkas of Tiruchendur taluk, Tirunelveli district, have dried up and died owing to drought;

(b) if so, whether the Government will be pleased to lay on the table of the House a statement showing the number of palmyra trees (village-war) which have partly dried up and fully dried up in those two firkas;

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(c) whether the Government have taken any relief measures in those areas; and if so, what they are; and

(d) whether the Government have taken any relief measures tax in respect of the palmyra trees which are completely dried up and dead?

THE HON. SRI M. A. MANICKAVELU NAICKER :—" (a) It is a fact that some palmyra trees in the two firkas mentioned have dried up.

" (b) A statement* is laid on the table of the House.

" (c) Four district board road works, three low scale famine relief works, eight minor irrigation works, 14 rural water-supply works and three food production works are being carried out to provide employment for the population affected by drought. Besides this the concession of giving Rs. 150 for deepening drinking water wells has been granted in 65 cases in the area. Multi-vitamin tablets and clothes are also being distributed to the needy people.

" (d) As the tree tax on the palmyras on patta dry lands is not subject to any revision during the currency of the present settlement, the pattadars are liable to pay the assessment already fixed at the time of re-settlement, even if the trees die. The Government have however since ordered that with effect from Fasli 1363 the tax on palmyra trees standing on dry lands in Tirunelveli district should be abolished altogether and that the dry assessments recoverable from the holders of lands hitherto paying tree tax in addition to land tax should be fixed at the highest dry rate per acre on the aggregate of the land tax plus the tree tax hitherto paid, whichever is less."

SRI S. B. ADITYAN :—" I understood the Hon. Revenue Minister to say that the palmyra tree tax was abolished and that some other tax was imposed in its place. May I know what justification there is for this step? As long ago as 1948, a promise was made on the floor of this House that the Government would consider the abolition of the palmyra tree tax altogether. Is not the substitution of another tax in the place of the abolished palmyra tree tax merely a change in the form of the tax and a violation of the spirit of that promise? "

THE HON. SRI M. A. MANICKAVELU NAICKER :—" No, Sir, it is not changing the form. The palmyra tree tax is really abolished. Suppose a pattadar was paying Rs. 20 by way of land tax *plus* the palmyra tree tax. After the abolition of palmyra tree tax, he will have to pay only Rs. 2–13–0 at the

* Printed as Appendix on page 154 infra.

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most. Suppose the former land tax *plus* the palmyra tree tax was Rs. 1–8–0. Now the owner will have to pay only Rs. 1–8–0 and not Rs. 2–13–0."

SRI S. B. ADITYAN :—"The hypothetical case taken by the Hon. Minister is very unreal. In fact what is prevalent in that area is that the land tax is in the region of 6 annas per acre and the palmyra tax is in the region of Rs. 2 per acre. By the abolition of the palmyra tax altogether, instead of reducing the tax to the level of the land tax, namely, six annas, the Government propose to keep it at the higest level. This is going against the promise of the Government given on the floor of the House." 11–30 a.m.

THE HON. SRI M. A. MANICKAVELU NAICKER :—"No, not at all. The hon. Member will realize the position when I say that the Government, by this abolition of the tree tax, have lost a few lakhs of rupees of income."

SRI S. B. ADITYAN :—"Sir, may I know whether the Government would simply abolish the palmyra tree tax and collect only the land tax, and leave it at that level?"

THE HON. SRI C. RAJAGOPALACHARI :—"The hon. Member who puts the question knows the conditions very well. But he does not put it quite clearly in this House. Where there are a number of trees on a bit of land, no cultivation can go on in that land, and the land revenue, so far as that land is concerned, is therefore, only nominal. But the tree tax was then being collected, and, therefore, it did not matter. Now, when we abolish the tree tax altogether, we cannot simply allow the owner of the land to have it both ways. He must at least pay the proper land revenue which in that area the land owner should pay. But it is difficult to go through the course of a re-settlement for this purpose, and so a formula was evolved by which he would have the best advantage out of it—and not an unjust advantage. He must pay either the amount he was paying, or the highest rate of dry assessment whichever is less. That is the formula. If it is properly examined, the hon. Member will see that there is no injustice in it. In no case is a man made to pay more than what he has been paying hitherto."

SRI S. B. ADITYAN.—"Sir, is it not a fact that the peasant is being asked to pay something in place of the palmyra tax, the abolition of which was promised by the Government on the floor of the House long ago? Is it not also a fact that the imposition of the palmyra tax is illegal according to the new Constitution, and the Government are merely adopting a new method in order to impose the unconstitutional palmyra tax?"

THE HON. SRI C. RAJAGOPALACHARI :—"The exposition is entirely wrong, Sir."